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PRIMITIVE SONGS AND DANCES: A SECOND-GRADE ASSEMBLY

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THE CAVE MEN'S CHANTS

The immediate inspiration for these cave men's chants came from Miss Dopp's story, in *The Early Cave Men*, of the death of the saber-toothed tiger, who was killed by the hero Strong Arm. The people celebrated their deliverance from this terrible animal by a feast, where they rejoiced with chants and dances.

Before making their verses, the children were asked to imagine what the cave men probably said in their chants and decided on a few simple points, such as the following:

1. The cave men were glad Saber-tooth was dead.
2. He was a terrible beast and all the people feared him.
3. Strong Arm was a brave man and a hero.

As many of the children did not know the nature of a chant, this was explained and illustrated for them. In their own productions, however, the chant as differing from the more lyrical form of song was not insisted upon. The work was all oral; in some cases words and music were given together, but most of the children made their lines first and the music afterward.

The words and music are given here in their original form, except two verses, where individuals were helped by other members of the class in correcting the rhythm of their lines. The author of No. 3 borrowed his tune from No. 1, with some very slight changes. Chant No. 7 was composed by several children, each giving a sentence, which was written on the board by the teacher. The music was supplied afterward by one child.

The monotony of the music, with the repetition of phrases, noticeable in these verses, give them a form resembling in character the music of early peoples. Children's original songs often fail to have such a characteristic form because the demands of their subject are not so simple.

I



Strong-arm was a man of youth, He killed the fearful Sa-ber-tooth,



Took his tusks a - way— Out of them made spears to - day.

—BESSIE

II



Hur - rah! hur - rah! Sa - ber Tooth is dead, Hur -



rah! hur-rah! Sa-ber Tooth is dead; Strong-arm killed him



with his might, And then we'll have a feast till night.

—ROBERT

III



Strong-arm was a brave youth, He killed the dreadful Saber-tooth, A



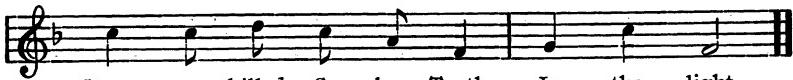
ver - y ug - ly beast, Now we may have a fine feast.

—SIGMUND

IV



I am so hap - py, My heart is so bright, Be-cause



Strong - arm killed Sa - ber Tooth, In the light.

—MARGARET

V



Look at the he - ro Strong-arm, Look at the he - ro Strong-arm, He
 killed the Sa-ber Tooth so fierce, And gave a cave to the fire clan.

—ALAN

VI



Strong-arm was a great he - ro, He killed the Sa - ber Tooth, It



did us great use, Now we have a feast Out of the ug - ly beast.

—HENRY

VII



When Sa-ber-tooth was liv-ing, He killed so man - y peo-ple, When



he came out of his cave, All the peo-ple were si - lent;



Strong-arm killed him with his spear, And all the peo-ple called him hero,



We are so hap - py that Sa - ber - tooth is dead, Hur -



rah! hur - rah! Sa - ber - tooth is dead.

—WARREN AND THE CLASS

VIII

Hur - rah! hur - rah! Sa - ber - tooth is dead! Hur -
rah! we have him no more to dread.

—MARION

IX

Some brave men once lived in a cave,
They were very strong and very brave,
And Strong Arm killed Saber-tooth,
And they called him their brave youth.

—JOHN

X

Strong Arm was so brave and good
He killed the fearful Saber-tooth.
He took his fur and tusks away,
And from his flesh made a feast all day.

—HOWARD

XI

Strong Arm was a brave old man,
He killed Saber-tooth, the beast of prey.
Let us praise him all we can,
Let us dance and sing today.

—LOUISE

XII

Strong Arm is a hero,
He killed the Saber-tooth.
Now we have a feast today
Until the neighbors go away.

—DOROTHY

XIII

Saber-tooth was fierce and wild,
And he killed all the people.
Strong Arm climbed up in a tree
Where Saber-tooth was sleeping,
Strong Arm threw a spear down
And killed the Saber-tooth.

—MARGARET R.

THE CAVE MEN'S DANCE

Miss Dopp's story tells how the cave people beat upon bones for their dancing and the children suggested the use of stones upon logs of wood. They tried both of these instruments, using the simple two-pulse rhythm characteristic of most primitive music. This was produced in primitive fashion, the weak accent being formed by the fall of the hammer after the rebound from the stroke which gives the strong note.

In their efforts to fit suitable steps and movements to the music, some of the children undoubtedly applied knowledge gained from the Indian shows so often seen in New York, and the less ready members of the class imitated the others. The teacher organized their suggestions and drilled them in the rhythm. The dance in its simplest form consisted of two springs upon each foot, bending the knees, but lifting only the heel from the ground. As the dance went on it grew faster, the arms were waved over the head, and the steps were elaborated. This was done by lifting the whole foot from the ground, when springing on the strong accent, and by crossing one foot in front or throwing it out in front or behind, while springing on the other foot. The knees were bent and the body inclined slightly forward throughout the dance.

When the results of the work were presented at an assembly the chants were sung by their authors and the dance followed. Two musicians beat upon bones and logs, a dozen braves danced one after another round the circle, while the chorus of cave people sang over and over in time to the drums:

Strong Arm was a man of youth
He killed the fearful Saber-tooth, etc.

In the development of the chants and dances, several English, music, and game periods were used. The music teacher co-operated with the class teacher in the work.